No. 56 dated 18.10.2004. The issue of further tightening the regime for screening consignments of metallic scrap is under the consideration of the Committee of Secretaries.

Negotiations with Gulf Cooperation Council

3068. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister authorized the Commerce and External Affairs Ministries to initiate negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council to conclude a Free Trade Agreement (FTA);

(b) whether the Prime Minister has pointed out that the Gulf region like South East and South Asia, is part of our natural economic hinterland and so we must pursue closer economic relations with all our neighbours;

(c) if so, whether both Commerce and External Affairs Minister visited these countries and had reached agreement; and

(d) if so, the details of the same and by when they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The Trade and Economic Relations Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, has decided that the Department of Commerce may proceed with negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Earthquake Resistant Constructions

3069. SHRI VIJAY J.DARDA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that traditional structures in many regions of India have strong earthquake resistant features as compared to post multi-storied complexes;

(b) if so, whether the standards of Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) for earthquake resistant constructions are being followed; and

(c) if not, whether Government are thinking of issuing guidelines for local municipal authorities and such other agencies to incorporate in their bye laws (BIS) standard and enforce them strictly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The traditional structures such as Dajji-Diwari construction or wood framed brick noggd construction in Jammu & Kashmir and some parts of Himachal Pradesh, stone construction with horizontal wood log falling in Uttaranchal and bamboo framed construction with irka walling in the North Eastern States are reportedly resistant against moderate to high intensity earthquakes. The multi-storied complexes designed and constructed in accordance with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Codes on earthquake resistant design of buildings are considered to be seismically safe.

(b) and (c) The Standard building codes prepared by Bureau of Indian Standards are being followed by most of the Ministries and Departments of the Central Government. A Committee of Experts was constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs to develop model building by laws, town and country planning legislations, zoning regulations and development control regulations for earthquake risk mitigation and management. The report submitted by the said Committee has been circulated to the State Governments/Union Territories Administrations with advice to adapt them to meet the requirements of the States/UTs.

Trade Pact with US and EU

3070. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether PM's Trade and Economic Relationship Committee (TERC) comprising Finance and Commerce Ministers have decided to go slow on bilateral economic/trade agreements with Washington and Brussels;

(b) if so, what are the main reasons that India has agreed to go slow on trade pacts with US & EU and to what extent it will affect our trade relations with these two countries; and